

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T AMMAN 8444

EXDIS

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: PFOR XF LE SY
SUBJECT: TALK WITH KING HUSSEIN LEBANON AND SYRIA

1. IN THE COURSE OF DISCUSSION WITH KING HUSSEIN NOV 3
TALKED TURNED TO LEBANON. KING HAS JUST BEEN BRIEFED BY
HIS PRINCIPLE INTELLIGENCE OFFICER. HE SAID SITUATION
CONTINUES TO LOOK BLEAK AND HE SEES NO POSSIBILITY OF
CHANGE OR ANY LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL. HE SAYS
HIS OWN CHIEF INTELLIGENCE OFFICER FEELS AS LONG AS THERE
ARE EXPLOSIVE AND ARMAMENTS FOR ALL FACTIONS, FIGHTING
WILL CONTINUE. JORDAN WENT THROUGH THE SAME TRAGIC CIR
CUMSTANCES AND ONLY WHEN HIS GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED WAS EXTENDED
AND WEAPONS AND EXPLOSIVE TAKEN OUT OF INDEPENDENT HANDS
WAS IT POSSIBLE TO STABILIZE THE SITUATION.

2. HE WAYS HE NOW REGARDS AS SERIOUS THE DEEPENING DIVISIONS
BETWEEN CHRISTIANS AND MOSLEMS IN THE ARAB WORLD EPITOMIZED
BY WHAT IS HAPPENING IN LEBANON. WORD WHICH HE IS RECEIVING
FROM THE WEST BANK CONVEYS TO HIM A DOUBLE DISAPPOINTMENT--
CONCERN AMONG PALESTINIANS HAS GROWN BECAUSE EGYPT
WHICH HAS BEEN THE PRINCIPLE PROTECTOR OF PALESTINIANS IN THEIR VIEW
HAS LEFT THE STRUGGLE WITH THE
SINAI ACCORD AND THERE IS AN INCREASING
CONCERN THAT THE MUSLEM-CHRISTIAN

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ASPECTS OF THE LEBANESE CONFLICT WILL SPREAD AND

BECOME AS A RESULT THE MECHANISM FOR ISOLATING THE
CHRISTIANS COMMUNITY IN THE WEST BANK.

3. KING ADDED, AS HE DID IN AN EARLIER DISCUSSION OF
LEBANON WITH ME, THAT HE WILL NEVER ALLOW THE RELIGIOUS
ISSUE TO GET A FOOTHOLD IN JORDAN. HE NOTED THAT HE HAD
PUT THE WORD OUT TO HIS OWN POLICE AND SECURITY FORCES TO
CLAMP DOWN ON ANY EVIDENCE AT ALL OF INCREASING RELIGIOUS
DISTRUST OR SECTARIANISM
IN THIS CONNECTION HE HAD RECENTLY BEEN FORCES
TO MOVE AGAINST SOME CHRISTIAN EVANGELISTS INCLUDING
A FEW AMERICANS, WHO HAD BEEN ACTIVELY PROSELYTIZING IN
JORDAN IN A SECTARIAN WAY WHICH INTENDED TO DEEPEN DIVISIONS
HERE. KING REGRETTED THIS ACTION BUT SAID IT HAD TO BE TAKEN
IN ORDER TO PRESERVE LOCAL RELIGIOUS HARMONY
AND TRANQUILITY.

4. WE DISCUSSED FOR A FEW MINUTES WHAT APPEARED TO BE
INCREASING FEDAYEEN AND SYRIAN INVOLVEMENT IN LEBANON
OVER THE LAST TWO WEEKS. KING SAID THEY HAD NOTICED SOME
OF THE SAME SIGNS BUT WAS RELUCTANT TO BE DRAWN OUT ON THE
SYRIAN POSTURE. HE REPEATED ONLY THAT HE THOUGHT THAT
SYRIA AND INDEED EVERYONE ELSE WANTED TO AVOID INCREASED
INTERVENTION IN THE PROBLEM.

5. IN CANVASSING THE VARIOUS OPTIONS HE SAID HE SAW NO POSSIBILITY OF
THE ISSUE BEING SETTLED BY ANY OUTSIDE INTERVENTION. WHAT
THE US HAD DONE IN 1958 HAD NOT REALLY SOLVED THE
PROBLEM AND WAS PROBABLY UNTHINKABLE NOW. I TOLD HIM I
THOUGHT THAT WAS INDEED THE CASE AND REACTED FOR HIM
THE VARIOUS STATEMENTS WE HAVE MADE INDICATING THAT IT
WOULD BE UNWISE AND UNTHINKABLE FOR ANYONE TO INTERVENE.
KING NOTED THAT IT WOULD PROBABLY BE VERY DIFFICULT FOR
THE ARABS TO INTERVENE SUCH INTERVENTION WOULD APPEAR
TO BE IN SUPPORT OF THE
MUSLIMS AND THEREBY AGGRAVATE THE SITUATION.
SIMILARLY HE DID NOT THINK THE UN COULD DO MUCH. HE
REMARKED IN PASSING THAT HE THOUGHT THE UN HAD BEEN SERIOUSLY
WEAKENED AND IN PRESENT TERMS WAS OBSERVING FAR LESS
THAN ITS FIRST HOUR.

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6. HE ASKED THAT I THOUGHT THE LEBANESE ARMY WAS DOING.
I TOLD HIM WE HAD NO EVIDENCE THAT THE ARMY WAS DOING
MUCH MORE OR WAS ABLE TO DO MUCH MORE THAN PICK UP SOME OF
THE PERIPHERAL SECURITY RESPONSIBILITIES IN
BEIRUT THEREBY POSSIBLY
FREEING THE ISF FOR MORE IMPORTANT DUTIES. WE
ALSO DISCUSSED THE FACT THAT THE ARMY WAS STILL LABELLED AS

A MARONITE FORCES IN MOSLEM QUARTERS AND THEREBY
ITS USE WOULD RESULT IN KARAME UNDERTAKING SERIOUS
POLITICAL LIABILITIES.

7. TURNING TO SYRIA, KING SAID THAT HE FELT THERE WOULD
BE LITTLE CHANGE IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE I PRESENT SYRIAN
ATTITUDES TOWARD THE NEGOTIATIONSAND THAT AS WE HAD DIS
CUSSED IN OUR LAST MEETING, HE WAS STILL HOPEFUL THAT THE
MANDATE ON THE GOLAN WOULD BE RENEWED. HE FELT SYRIA DID
NOT WANT WAR AND THAT THE FLURRY OF ACTIVITY OVER THE LAST
WEEKS ON BOTH SIDES CONCERING AN INCREASED READINESS
POSTURE ON THE PART OF SYRIA WAS A MISREADING OF THE SITUATION.
HE STILL FELT THAT THE S HAD THE CAPACITY TO
MOVE THINGS TOWARD PACE AND THAT WE SHOULD
NOT LET THIS OPPORTUNITY PASS.
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